

**Minutes of the ASFS AGM held via Zoom**  
**Wednesday 8 December 2021**

Start time: 1:15

Attendees:

Executive committee: Natalie Edwards (President/Chair), Ben McCann (VP), Chris Hogarth (Treasurer), Leslie Barnes (Secretary), Gemma King (Communications), Clara Sitbon (Post-grad)

Members present: Barbara Hanna, Beth Kearney, Nick Strole, Sonia Wilson, Sophie Coombs, Gemma King, Bertrand Bourgeois, Alistair Rolls, Tess Do, Amy Hubbell, Frederic Barthelet, James Cannon, Benjamin McCann, Alexis Bergantz, Clara Sitbon, Jarrod Hayes, Paul Gibbard, Jenny Barnett, Joe Hardwick, Michelle Royer, Irwin Compiegne, Andrew McGregor, Marie-Laure Vuaille-Barcan, Charles Davis-Rice, Josephine Goldman, Briony Neilson

1. Chair's Welcome and Apologies

Natalie welcomed delegates to the conference and thanked the UQ organising committee for the conference organisation. She discussed the ASFS exec activities this year, including efforts to diversify the conference offerings to reflect the breadth of our disciplinary interests. She also noted the efforts, started under Alistair Rolls, to develop our international networks.

Apologies:

none

2. Approval of 2020 AGM minutes

Natalie moved to accept the minutes, Clara and Ben seconded.

3. Actions/business arising from previous minutes

No action from the minutes though we have tried to incorporate feedback from the member survey last year.

4. 2021 Conference

Barbara acknowledged the ASFS exec support for the conference organization – financial support, website, membership.

Amy thanked Barbara for taking on the lion's share of the organizational tasks. She also thanked Beth Kearney, Peter Cowley, Joe Hardwick and Jenny Barnett for their efforts.

5. Accounts

Chris noted that not much has been going on financially, but gave a few updates:

We spent \$300 for each of the ASFS 2021 keynotes. We've paid for the prizes, but this money hasn't gone out yet bc, eg, the travel grant cannot be used. We've grown a bit in the last year, hoping to put that money toward the conference next year. Other expenses include app. \$400 annually toward site maintenance.

Natalie underscored that we have \$43,000 in the bank – we'll think about how we can invest that back to the membership.

## 6. Mentorship program

Leslie reported that the program has continued successfully, with 5 new matches.

Nat added that mentorship can serve many purposes across multiple career stages, and both noted how good it is to see that many people are acting as both mentor and mentee.

## 7. Communications:

Gemma reported another banner year for online engagement and membership, including 139 paid up memberships. The website has had 4326 visits, up 30% from last year. The FB group has 202 members, up 20%. Gemma encouraged members to share your own news on the FB page directly (jobs, CfPs, etc.) The Twitter account has 696 followers, up 22%.

## 8. Postgraduate activities

Clara has had a very busy year. There are 17 PGs across Aus and NZ, same as last year; the PG prize had 4 entries (2 less than last year), but we think this may be due to last year's *AJFS* volume focusing on PGs. Clara thanked the PG and Collin Nettelbeck prize committees and congratulated the winners (Emma McNicol and Beth Kearney). She reported on the new PG writing group, which has come out of the feedback collected last year. This group met for 4 whole-day writing sessions, which were followed by a peer-feedback period. The group then met to debrief on the feedback. 3 participants completed the program and have commented on what a great success it was for them, personally and professionally. The PG forum this year was also a great success, thanks to the help of Jenny Barnett and Beth Kearny. There were 10 participants. Thanks too to the panellists, who shared their expertise on diversifying research (Valentina Gosetti, Gemma King, Jacki Dutton) and the job market (Natalie Edwards, Charlotte Mackay, Jarrod Hayes, Victoria Souliman).

Nat chimed in to thank Clara for her efforts.

## 9. *Australian Journal of French Studies*

A new item that we'd like to make a recurring part of the AGM: Jarrod added his congratulations to the winner of the PG prize, as editor of *AJFS*. He commented on his transition into role, then reported that we've been invited by LUP to increase our issues to 4/year. Issue 2 for next year is reserved for this conference, which is a bit tighter turnaround than usual, but Jarrod is very keen to see the conference produce an issue. He plans to keep the same ratio of special/conference/misc issues going forward and is experimenting with special dossiers mixed in with misc issues. He sees his role as stewarding a "national treasure" and encourages members to take advantage. One way to participate is to increase the number of book reviews in the journal, and he encourages members to request a review for any recent publications.

Paul inquired about reviews of translations, and Jarrod said that this would help raise the profile of NTROs.

Natalie thanked Jarrod for his efforts, and both remarked on the ongoing fruitful collaborations between the ASFS and the *AJFS*.

## 10. Future conferences

Nat expressed our collective hope that we'll be in NZ next year (fingers crossed!) She recalled how beautifully planned the NZ team were in 2019. Charles Rice-Davis gave an

update on the border situation: at the moment, it looks like things may open up in late April, with the end of mandatory isolation etc. The universities there, however, still discourage international travel, in both directions.

Nat's view is that a blended conference is probably the way to go in the future – for sustainability, for equity, etc. – with some of us in person and others online. Amy concurred (via chat), pointing out that funding may still be difficult next year. The exec will continue to discuss. Natalie also thanked USyd for offering to host in 2023.

#### 11. Election of Office Bearers for 2021

Natalie opened by noting that she does not want to change the ASFS constitution, but she wanted to add a few adhoc positions as needed, to increase diversity of exec membership:

- a. proposal for ad-hoc committee member: Membership Secretary
- b. proposal for ad-hoc committee member: International Liaison Officer

Both proposals were approved by the members.

Ben McCann, as VP, served as Elections officer and declared all positions vacant, calling for nominations (to be seconded, confirmed, countered via hands, emojis or in chat).

Our new exec members, Jenny and Nick, introduced themselves and were welcomed by the members.

Gemma spoke briefly about taking on the VP role and connecting ASFS to French communities more broadly, including the Embassy in Canberra.

Nat also spoke briefly about ASFS as her entry into Australia; she was struck by the collegiality and is committed to continuing and growing the organisation. Her aims:

- 1) Increase inclusivity, beyond the G8
- 2) Make us more visible and thus improve our standing nationally as a research discipline
- 3) Increase our presence internationally

She also thanked Ben for his years of service on the committee.

Results of the elections:

President: Natalie Edwards (non contested)

Vice-President: Gemma King (non contested)

Treasurer: Chris Hogarth (non contested)

Secretary: Leslie Barnes (non contested)

Communications officer: Nick Strole (non contested)

Post-graduate officer: Clara Sitbon (non contested)

Ad-hoc 1: Membership secretary: Jenny Barnett (non contested)

Ad-hoc 2: International officer: Christie Margrave (non contested)

12. Any other business

No other business was raised. Natalie encouraged members to be in touch going forward.

Meeting closed at 3:02.